

**Testimony of Tom Swan**

**Before the Government Administration and Election Committee**

**Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG)**

**In Support of SB 227 AAC STATE ELECTION ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION COMMITTEE REVIEW, SB 228 AAC ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FILINGS and opposed to HB 5277 AAC A KNOWING AND WILLFUL VIOLATION OF CHAPTER 155**

**March 3, 2014**

Good Afternoon Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and other members of the GAE Committee, my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG). On behalf of CCAG's over 20,000 member families I want to thank you for raising SB 227 AAC STATE ELECTION ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION COMMITTEE REVIEW, SB 228 AAC ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FILINGS and strongly urge your rejection of HB 5277 AAC A KNOWING AND WILLFUL VIOLATION OF CHAPTER 155.

The recent reporting around the resignation of a caucus staff person and the investigation around it points to the need to enact SB 227 AAC SEEC COMMITTEE REVIEW bill. Candidates should be required to submit copies of their campaign committee bank statements, especially after you lessened the audit requirements.

The scandal mentioned above also points to the need to reject HB5277 AAC A KNOWING AND WILLFUL VIOLATION OF CHAPTER 155. It is shocking that you would consider eliminating criminal penalties for individuals who knowingly and willfully break the law in regards to campaign finance, especially with such a cloud hanging over the building. It is even worse that you consider this after weakening the citizen election program last year. While we would support increasing the fines we strongly oppose eliminating the criminal penalties.

Finally, we strongly support the establishment of a pilot program for municipal campaign finance filings that is outlined in SB 228. We believe that this type of a program will lead to greater transparency, increase accountability, and lessen possible corruption at the local level. We also believe that it will be successful enough that such a program could go statewide after the next round of municipal elections.

Thank you for your consideration.